

The Classical Bulletin

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No. 9

Plato and Poetry

"Many are the beauties of the place, the groves and the statues and the temples and the stream of the Cephissus flowing by . . . but his eye is just now arrested by one object—it is the very presence of Plato."—*Newman*

Newman has just painted his matchless picture of the natural beauties of Attica. Such a picture it is as one would not easily forget; for often Newman, like Plato, is a poet writing in prose. How beautifully he has told us of the art of Athens, of her oratory and drama, of her philosophy and the tombs of her mighty dead. And now when all has been described, he stops and tells us to look at Plato, "who will be a stay for the memory to rest on, a burning thought in the heart, a bond of union with men of like mind ever afterwards."

It is scarcely by chance that Newman here turns again to the beauties of the place: the groves, and the statues and temples, and the sweet-flowing Cephissus. Nor is it merely to describe the Academe, that he does so—this he has already done. Nor is it, again, the poet in him that reverts to the charms of nature, though it is that too. He does so, rather, because he is picturing to himself the great-souled Plato gazing on these beauties and drawing thence his inspiring visions.

Whenever we would speak of the poets or sculptors of Athens, we turn instinctively for an explanation of their genius to the wonders of the Attic climate. If they see with a clear, bright vision, we remember the purity of the Attic air, that lent a crystal glory to sea and mountain. If Sophocles sings of Colonus, we know that he sings because Athens was beautiful. If Euripides softly murmurs:

Hushed was the ether; in
hushed silence whispered not
Leaves in the coppice nor
the blades of meadow grass,

we picture the quiet of an Attic day. Or Aristophanes hymns the clouds, as Shelley might have done,

Let us rise with the radiant dew
Of our nature undefiled,

and we see the spotless clouds of the sky of Attica. We look upon the billows of Homer's wine-dark deep; we behold the golden-sandaled dawn that Sappho knew, and the unnumbered laughter of Aeschylus's Aegean. No wonder we exclaim that they were poets. How then shall we forget that Plato knew all these beauties; that they were part of his boyhood and his young manhood? Truly it was the beauty of Greece, rather than her philosophy, that Plato took to himself and perfected. His

real inspiration was a longing for beauty and harmony. And it is surely wrong to picture him as one apart, buried in a study with his books, while all the glory of nature flooded the landscape. There were not books at Athens in those days. It was in nature that the Greeks found all their lore, as Shakespeare has it,

Books in the running brooks.

So Plato, though he himself would have protested that, after all, nature is but an image of the true beauty, yet, when he declared in many a golden phrase that the just soul is beautiful and harmonious, was drawing his inspiration from the same source as Pheidias and Sophocles. Thus it was that this great thinker, in his search for the true and good, found it in the perfection of beauty. That was the birthright of an Athenian!

For Plato was not the first to sense the identification of the beautiful and the good. We feel that every Greek must have sympathized with this, Plato's dominating idea; for example, when he writes so sublimely:

Let our artists rather be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful and graceful. Then will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the good in everything; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason.

That exquisite vision is utterly Grecian in spirit and conception. It is nothing but the enshrinement of beauty in an ideal Attica.

But granting all this, it is when we come to Plato's attitude towards poetry, that we are hard pressed to reconcile Plato and the beauty of Athens. It is one of those strangely true fictions that tells of Aristotle's having said: "I love Plato and I love the truth; but I feel it my solemn duty to prefer the truth." We can well imagine some other of the Athenians, some eager-eyed one, saying in like manner: "I, too, love Plato and I love the beautiful; but I feel it is my solemn duty to prefer the beautiful." For to any Athenian the poetry of Greece must have been synonymous with beauty. And now, here is Plato, who will not have poetry in his ideal state!

It is a hard choice: Plato or poetry. "Plato," says a young poet of yesterday, "has ever been accounted a spirit of flame and music, a divine poet." Surely, Plato was a poet at heart. He himself says he loved and revered Homer from his boyhood. And though he concludes (desperately, like Aristotle!), "Yet man must not be honored more than the truth," still somehow we

feel that for him the abandoning of Homer would have been as piteous a thing as the sacrifice of Iphigenia. We feel that if his ideal state had ever come into being in this unideal world, he would have been constrained to welcome the beauties of Homer. In much the same way the great poetry of the Golden Age probably saved Aristotle from admitting free verse. Such were the blessings of living at Athens!

But apart from what Plato might have done, which after all is no defense of his theory, we should do well to keep in view the fact that he does not exclude all poetry, but *the poets*, that is, most of the poems. Moreover, he must have had very specially in mind the poetry of his day. If we remember his purpose in writing, if we remember the use and misuse of the poets' sayings, if we recall the times in which he lived and the theatre of his time, we shall more nearly understand his real attitude. It is much as if one should look at the modern novel and exclaim, righteously, we think, that novels should be consigned to oblivion, to say nothing of excluding them from our ideal city of dreams.

But there is a deeper and truer reason why Plato and poetry are not irreconcilable. And that is because he would have kept the best and brightest of poetry. That is to say, he would have idealized poetry, as he did all else with which he came into contact. Surely, poetry would never have been the loser if idealism had always been her companion. She has no need of realism, or of madmen, such as Masters. And, if Plato loved her so, that he would have lifted her wholly above the earth, can we be so very certain that he loved her, not wisely, but too well? She would still be the pure, white-robed queen; still wear the diadem of the Paradise of Dante; still sparkle with the jewels of all the poetry that has ever hymned the beautiful and brave and good.

How else could it be, when a poet is painting her portrait?

Truly even Plato whosoever well considereth, shall find that in the body of his work, though the inside and strength were philosophy, the skin as it were and beauty depended most of poetry. For all standeth upon dialogues; wherein he feigneth many honest burgesses of Athens to speak on such matters that if they had been set on the rack they had never confessed them; besides his poetical describing the circumstances of their meetings, as the well ordering of a banquet, the delicacy of a walk, with interlacing mere tales, as Gyges' ring and others, which who knoweth not to be flowers of poetry did never walk in Apollo's garden.

So wrote the exquisite Sir Philip Sydney, whose shepherd boy, "piping as though he never would grow old," inspired the like description in Keats' famous ode. Like Sydney, so every true poet must at least sympathize with Plato, and sympathize, too, with the ideal poetry of his ideal land. But there will yet be some who think his attitude a denial of true beauty, and who insist on repeating that, after all, he did exclude the poets.

Once upon a time Sir Thomas More wrote:

"He asketh me why I have not contended with Erasmus, whom he calleth my darling of all his long while, for translating this word *ecclesia* into the word *congregatio* . . . had I found in Erasmus my darling the shrewd intent and purpose that I find with Tyndale, Erasmus my darling should be no more my darling. But I find in Erasmus my darling that he detesteth and abhorreth the errors and heresies that Tyndale plainly teacheth and abideth

by, and therefore Erasmus my darling shall be my dear darling still."

In some such sort I would reply:

They ask me why I have not contended with Plato, whom they call my darling, for translating this word *beauty* into this word *poesy*. If I had found in Plato, my darling, the shrewd intent and purpose I find in Philistine and Puritan, Plato my darling should be no more my darling. But I find in Plato, my darling, that he detesteth and abhorreth only the errors and heresies against beauty, and therefore Plato, my darling, shall be my dear darling still.

Rome, Italy

WM. HETHERINGTON, S. J.

Ad Martyres Americanos, post trecentos fere annos nuper in album Sanctorum relatos

Pone lugubres, pia Musa, vestes;
sume festivas; celebra beatos
Martyres, Indis fidei ferentes
munera sacra.

Qui *diu* palmis caruere laudis,
dum silent anni: velut astra *tandem*
caelites fulgent; rosa liliisque
tempora cingunt.

Dura sors illos superare quondam
nisa, nequicquam cumulabat inter
senta silvarum Boreaeque tesqua
dira pericla.

Tot minas fortis, generosa Virtus,
in Deum tentis oculis, potenter
risit, Indorum domuitque fastus
voce benigna.

Cordis ardentes radiis Sacratī,
fortiter quondam glaciem, vel aestus
solis, incultos homines ferasque,
usque serena

mente vicerunt; digitos cruento
ense praecisos, cruciata flammis
ossa, detractam capitique pellem,
nil trepidarunt.

Quos furor, crimen, Satanaeque cultus
retibus diris laqueant, iniquis
vinculis solvunt, animasque tingunt
fonte salutis.

Restat Indorum male grex luporum:
Martyres, vestras decorate palmas
denuo sertis—in ovile ducto
iam grege toto!

Praestet hoc tandem Deus Ipse, vestris
adnuens votis: resonabit usque
laetior paeon, ter *io triumphe*
concinet orbis!

E Schola Campiana Pratocanensi A. F. GEYSER, S. J.

Jesuit teachers of the Classics will find it to their advantage to attend the tenth annual convention of the Missouri Province Classical Association at Loyola University, Chicago, on August 17, 18, and 19. A wide range of topics will be included in the papers and discussions, which, it is hoped, will not only touch upon the immediate interests of each one present, but will link these interests more closely with those of teachers of other subjects.

Caesar's Use of the Present Participle

The thrilling story of the Civil War, as told in the Third Book of *De Bello Civili*, abounds in participles. The very opening chapter is conspicuous for their presence, and you feel instantly a new current—shall I say, of emotion?—in Caesar! As you move along in the narrative, *timens*, *existimans*, *sperans*, and participles of allied meaning, keep coming up. Whereas in the previous books but four present participles are used to unveil the hidden motives that guided the opposing generals in their tactical decisions, in the Third Book alone almost forty instances greet you! Now Pompey, now Caesar, then their subordinates, Curio and Domitius on Caesar's side, Libo, Varro, Bibulus, and Otacilius of Pompey's forces, are made to unbosom, in the shy and stealthy present participle, their secret hopes, their covert fears, their shrewd calculations. You grow suspicious and wonder what Caesar is about. How can he read the inmost thoughts of others? And why does he engage in this mind-reading here, after almost completely abstaining from it in the Gallic Commentaries and in the earlier portions of the Civil War narrative? Is he stooping to sully Pompey's reputation? Is he adding new hues to his self-portraiture at Pompey's expense?

Let us remember Caesar's prime purpose in writing these Commentaries. He wants, of course, to give an account of the campaigns, but an account that will win for him the confidence of the Roman people. At the same time, he cannot openly stultify Pompey or glorify himself; for that would defeat his purpose. If he remarks (III, 70), *Pompeius insidias timens, credo, quod haec praeter spem acciderant eius . . .*, he is, it is true, using the participle to imply that his opponent owed much to luck; but the suggestion is not over-bald. Again, when his strategy outwits Pompey by a reverse march, he calls explicit attention to his success by an explanatory participial phrase: *ut accidit, Pompeius enim primo ignorans eius consilium, quod diverso ab ea regione itinere profectum videbat* (III, 41). The same chapter has three such motivating participles, each contributing its unobtrusive share towards creating the impression which Caesar aims to produce, the impression of his own fitness for leadership. He is but consistent in describing his enemy as *timens*, or as thwarted, after hoping for success (*sperans*).

In revealing to us his own soul, Caesar continually pictures himself as sharp-visioned, even where events prove that he had been too bold. His calculation, we are told, had been sound enough, but Fortune had frowned on his attempts. Again, he will show himself quick in responding to generosity. He restores to grace those who had offered him help, which he had never used, *aestimans ac si usus esset, quoniam fecisset potestatem* (III, 1). This is hardly blunt enough to be called braggadocio. So, too, when he allowed the traitorous Allobroges to go unharmed, he makes a graceful gesture to point out the esteem in which he held valor: *multa virtuti eorum concedens* (III, 60). His excuse for meddling in Egyptian affairs is given with participial unconcern, *controversias regum ad se, quod consul esset, pertinere existimans*

(III, 107). After all, he is Caesar. A mere aside, as it were, a bare hint of self-justification, is sufficient.

Caesar's African campaign, conducted by Curio, was a dismal failure. Perhaps to efface any spot that it might leave on his good name, he offers a word of explanation: (*Curio*) *copias P. Attii Vari despiciens duas legiones . . . transportabat* (II, 23). And later: (*Curio*) *his auctoribus temere credens consilium commulat* (II, 38). Whatever you may think of Curio after reading that, one thing is certain: you are not blaming Caesar, not even implicitly, for the mishap. Whatever was at the back of Caesar's head in laying hold of these numerous causal-motive participles in his *De Bello Civili*, he has succeeded in satisfying the reader's normal curiosity. When titanic military geniuses, such as Caesar and Pompey, are in action, we expect from the historian or chronicler more than a moving-picture narrative. We want to know what their shrewd minds were engaged in thinking when the situation grew tense. In taking us behind the scenes, the warrior historian greatly heightens the charm of his account.

If we read the Third Book carefully, the stylistic virtue of the many present participles will hardly escape us. Here such a participle will give his sentence that brevity and smoothness which are true Caesarian characteristics. There it will add the spice of variety to a complex sentence structure. Compressed writing is so apt to grow monotonous, that we feel relieved by the use of a participle, thrown in to vary the clause sequence, as in: *Labienus, cum impetravisset, ut sibi captivos tradi iuberet, omnes productos ostentationis causa, ut videbatur, quo maior perfugae fides haberetur, commilitones appellans et magna verborum contumelia interrogans, solerentne veterani milites fugere, in omnium conspectu interfecit* (III, 71). See how he wraps up for us all that information in one tidy package; for without the present participles, it would be a clumsy bundle, with two more *cum*-clauses dangling over the edge.

When things grow feverishly hot towards the end of the Third Book, the frequency of these participles grows apace. *Hac habita oratione, exposcentibus militibus et studio pugnae ardentibus, tuba signum dedit* (III, 90), reminds one of a football coach's pleasant duty of whipping his team into a fighting mood between the halves of a championship game. And note, by the way, how deftly the two participles, which, agreeing with *militibus*, reveal the soldiers' state of mind, in point of fact illustrate Caesar's generalship. In III, 91, a present participle brings into light a touching scene: *Simul respiciens Caesarem, 'Faciam,' inquit, 'hodie, imperator, ut aut vivo mihi aut mortuo gratias agas.'*

The present participle may be looked at by the student of Latin as a grammatical function, partly verb, partly adjective, partly noun, with their concomitants of declension, conjugation, agreement, etc., an instrument in the hands of the drill-master, used for the torture of the young Latinist; and it may be looked at by him as a delicate instrument for the expression of men's thoughts and emotions.

St. Louis, Mo.

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No. 9

To Our Readers

The current issue closes the seventh volume of the CLASSICAL BULLETIN. By indications that have come to them from many sources, the editors judge that the BULLETIN is serving a useful purpose and maintaining something of a distinctive character, slightly different from that of other periodicals devoted to the interests of the Classics. Whilst articles of a more technical kind have not been excluded from its pages, and pedagogical aids have not been entirely neglected, the BULLETIN has endeavored to serve especially those teachers of high-school and college Latin and Greek whose ideal it is to make their teaching of the Classics truly formative and liberalizing. Hence the stress constantly laid in these pages upon literary interpretation of the classical authors. Moreover, in view of the sad disproportion existing at the present time between the number of students taking Latin and those taking Greek, a special effort has been made to stimulate and maintain interest in Greek studies. For this, we believe, all true lovers of the Classics will thank us.

If you have found the BULLETIN helpful in your work, you can assist in increasing its usefulness and assuring its permanence by renewing your subscription promptly when the annual statement is sent to you, by recommending it to your colleagues and friends who are interested in the Classics, by having sample copies sent to prospective subscribers through the circulation manager, and, last but not least, by submitting articles, notes, items of interest, requests for information to the editors. This latter practice will enable the editors to keep in touch with their audience and its more immediate needs.

Rhetoric in the Collects of the Roman Missal

In his treatise *On Style* Demetrius devotes seventy-five brief sections to a discussion of the so-called elevated style. Section forty-five opens with the assertion that "Elevation is also secured by a rounded form of composition," and goes on to illustrate it by a quotation from Thucydides: "The river Achelous, flowing from Mount Pindus through Dolopia and the land of the Agrianians and Amphiloehians, having passed the inland city, Stratus, and discharging itself into the sea near Oeniadae, and surrounding that town with a marsh, makes a winter expedition impossible owing to the floods." The translation, by W. Rhys Roberts, in the Loeb edition, keeps close to the original, in which the subject and the predicate are placed at the beginning and towards the end of the sentence respectively, while all the rest is clamped together by three participles in agreement with the subject. The section closes with Demetrius' comment: "All this impressiveness (σύντασις ἢ τοιαύτη μεγαλοπρέπεια) arises from the rounded period and from the fact that the historian hardly allows a rest to himself and the reader."

To make his meaning quite clear, Demetrius explains wherein the "roundedness" of the sentence from Thucydides consists, by showing how easily that quality of style might have been lost: all that was needed to spoil the periodic effect, was to break up the sentence in some such way as this: "The river Achelous flows from Mount Pindus and empties into the sea near Oeniadae; but before reaching the outlet, it converts the plain of Oeniadae into a marsh, so that the water forms a defence and protection against the attacks of the enemy in winter." Demetrius adds: "If the phrasing of the sentence were to be varied in this way, there would be many resting-places in the narrative, but its stateliness would be destroyed."

In other words, the passage from Thucydides fulfills the requirements of a "period," or a definite rhythmical and logical unit that "has a beginning and an end," a sentence movement forecast and fulfilled by the speaker, divined and held by the hearer. Its characteristic is that conclusiveness which satisfies at once ear and mind. In sound and in syntax it is the opposite of formless aggregation, or the addition of clause to clause as by afterthought.¹ In the sentence from Thucydides, the subject is qualified by three participles. The reader wonders what the historian is driving at by qualifying the subject in this unusual manner, but his curiosity is laid to rest when he learns that the river "makes a winter expedition impossible." This is exactly what Thucydides had intended to show by his description of the river: "It seemed impracticable in winter to make a campaign against Oeniadae, whose inhabitants alone of the Acarnanians were always hostile; for the river Achelous. . . ."

In a footnote on this passage, Dr. Roberts quotes, as "a splendid example" of this form of stately and well-rounded composition, the Prayer of St. Chrysostom given in the *Book of Common Prayer*, which reads as follows:

"Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto

thee; and dost promise, that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests: Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting."

Whatever else may be said about the periodic character of this prayer, the punctuation mark (:), which separates the address to God from the first word of the petition, serves a rhetorical purpose; for it divides the prayer into two halves, the first of which raises an expectation in the mind of the reader as to the Church's purpose in thus addressing God, while the second satisfies it. In a prayer of this kind, that is, in a prayer of petition, the address directed to God is never self-sufficient, but is always intended as a preliminary to, and a background for, the actual petition. And so we have here again a sentence movement "forecast and fulfilled by the speaker," or, to use the words of Aristotle, we have a sentence that consists of "a beginning and an end," which is his definition of a period.

Those who are acquainted with the Roman Missal will be struck with the aptness of Dr. Roberts' reference to the prayer of St. Chrysostom, as an example of the elevated style, and with the fact that almost all the official prayers of the Church, at least all those that are of ancient origin, show more or less the same rounding out and compactness which Demetrius declares is a characteristic of the elevated style of composition.

By way of illustration, the collect for the fourth Sunday after the Epiphany may be quoted:

Deus, qui nos, in tantis periculis constitutos,
pro humana scis fragilitate
non posse subsistere:
da nobis salutem mentis et corporis;
ut ea, quae pro peccatis nostris patimur,
te adiuvante vincamus.

This prayer is not so rich in flowers or foliage as that product of the luxuriant East, but is rooted in the same ancient rhetoric. The first half of the prayer contains the address, followed by a statement of the grounds of our confidence in God. This sort of opening is typical of the Sunday Collect. The second half contains the petition. In one point of view, this product of the Western mind is even more compact than the other, for the last colon of the address (*non posse subsistere*) corresponds exactly with the last colon of the petition (*te adiuvante vincamus*). Not only is the number of syllables and words the same (for *te* and *ad-* may be pronounced as one syllable), but the sentiments correspond exactly: "of ourselves we cannot subsist" and "with thy help we can conquer." And thus Isocolon and Antithesis (two precious Gorgianic figures!) join hands to render the composition even graceful in its compactness. An excuse for the following rendering may be the fact that it tries to preserve the structure of the original. Moreover, the Sunday Collects of the Roman Missal are rhythmical units, intended to be chanted or sung.

O God, who knowest that for human frailty,
set as we are in the midst of such great perils,
we cannot keep our footing:
grant us health of mind and body;
so that against the consequences of our sins
we may with thy help prevail.

The Collect for Septuagesima is another illustration of the periodic structure which runs through the prayers of the Missal:

Preces populi tui, quaesumus, Domine,
clementer exaudi:
ut qui iuste pro peccatis nostris affligimur,
pro tui nominis gloria misericorditer liberemur.

In clemency hear, we pray, O Lord,
Thy people's prayers:
that we who are justly afflicted for our sins,
may be mercifully delivered for the glory of Thy name.

It is somewhat surprising at first sight to find so much grandeur, so much elevation of style, in the Church's prayers. Is there room for rhetoric when man kneels before Almighty God? The question has exercised the acumen of Cardinal Newman, who attempts an answer in his sermon on *Profession without Hypocrisy* (Parochial and Plain Sermons, Vol. I). On the literary side, there is room here for an interesting inquiry. It may be asked, whether this magnificence of the Church's official orations reflects, as might be surmised, the *grandezza* of the Roman people, or is perhaps a trait imported into the Western liturgy from the East, as the prayer of St. Chrysostom might suggest, or is an echo of the official prayer of the Synagogue, as must seem natural when we recall that our liturgy dates from the age of the Apostles, or is finally the simple expression of the human heart that calls upon Almighty God and pours out its petition. That there is an historical problem here is evident; and that the problem of formulating prayer is as old as Homer, is clear from the *Iliad*, which shows the ingenuity of the old bard in devising ever new forms of prayer, suited to the needs and character of the petitioner, whether man, hero, or even divinity.

An inquiry into the rhetoric of the Church's prayers, both in the Roman Missal and the Roman Ritual, would undoubtedly show, nay, has already shown to some extent,² that the Collects perpetuate the best traits of the national Roman character. Rhetoric was not the monopoly of Roman orator or Roman rhetorician, but found its way, eventually, into Christian Roman prayer, and there, to this day, imparts tone and elevation to the stately liturgy of the Church. The Collects of the Roman Missal are a last vestige of the old *maiestas populi Romani*.
St. Louis, Mo. SR. GONZAGA HAESSLY, O. S. U.

NOTES

1. Baldwin, *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic*, p. 29.
2. Baumstark, *Vom geschichtlichen Werden der Liturgie*, p. 78 ff., discusses the influence of Roman *Sprache und Volksart* on das *unübertrëfliche Kunstwerk der älteren stadtrömischen Oration*.

Princeps omnium virtutum illa sapientia, quam σοφία Graeci vocant, — prudentiam enim, quam Graeci φρόνησιν dicunt, aliam quandam intellegimus, quae est rerum expetendarum fugiendarumque scientia.—Cicero.

Greek Humor

Nihil est quod illi non persequantur suis argutiis.

There is a childlike playfulness running like a silver thread through the tales of Homer's wonderland, and a disarming guilelessness constantly revealing itself in the pages of Herodotus, which are more delightful than conscious humor. But the subtle irony of the Platonic dialogues, the rollicking farce of Aristophanic comedy, and Lucian's more sophisticated satire, prove beyond a doubt that the Greeks, with all their nobler gifts, were not deficient in a native sense of humor. Sometimes one wonders whether the great Aristotle himself was not jesting when he put laughter into the genus of the ugly.

But our modern high-school and college boy often finds his Greek authors dull. "Homer!" exclaims the young college freshman, "Why, he is an old simpleton, with his Circes and Sirens, his Scyllas and Charybdises, his Athenas holding Achilles by the hair, his pouting heroes, and his childish adventures!—Socrates? A boresome, quibbling old impostor!—Demosthenes? A noisy and abusive demagogue!—Antigone? Not a girl, but a statue!"

Our young people are perhaps somewhat sophisticated—and perhaps a little superficial, too. I am not so sure that the Greeks were in any way dull. In hitting off a situation with an apt and witty remark they showed plenty of dexterity. Witness the following story from the Scholiast on Hermogenes.

Tisias, a young aspirant to oratorical fame, took lessons from the famous rhetorician Corax (Mr. Crow, we should call him in English). After a long lapse of time Mr. Crow grew impatient for his fee, and finally brought action against his pupil to recover it. In his plea before the jury he presented this dilemma: "If I win the case, Gentlemen, I get the money by your verdict. If I lose, I also claim my fee, because in that case I shall have clearly demonstrated that I deserve it for having taught my pupil so well that he can defeat his own master."—"Not so, Gentlemen of the jury," replied Tisias, "for if I win the case, I need not pay by your verdict; and if I lose, he does not deserve his fee for having taught me so poorly." But the jury, continues the Scholiast, dismissed the case from court with the declaration: "Bad Crow, bad eggs!" If Corax and Tisias were clever, somebody in that jury was a wag. *Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*

They seem to have had their Wayne Wheelers and Bishop Cannons in those days, too; for thus runs a naïve little Anacreontic ditty that has come down to us:

The black earth drinks,
The trees drink up the earth,
The sea drinks in the streams,
The sun drinks up the sea,
The moon drinks of the sun—
Why quarrel then with me, my friends,
If I, too, want a drink?

Nor is there lack of wit in the lines of the poet who says:

Every day the ladies say:
"Anacreon, you're getting old.

Just take the mirror in your hand
And see your hair—
How that they are no more."—
"My hair," quoth he, "in sooth,
Whether they be or not,
I know not. But this I know,
That forasmuch as time is short,
I must redeem it well,
And merry make the more!"

Stories like the following have come down to us from old Greece in great numbers.

One day Padius was traveling with a friend and came to an inn. In the corner of the room was seated a man whom Padius thought he recognized as Maonius, an old acquaintance of his. When he had confided his suspicions on the subject to his traveling companion, the latter replied: "Why don't you go up to him, then, and greet him like an old friend?"—"No," said Padius, "for I am not quite certain that it is Maonius; and, you know, Maonius was always such a timid person and so bashful in society, that if it turns out not to be *he* after all, but some stranger, he will feel extremely embarrassed at my familiarity." The assumed simplicity of these Greek tales is often so disarming that we may actually be taken in, and find that the laugh is on us, and not on the Greek.

The Cretan Greeks, as we know from St. Paul, were looked upon by their continental kinsmen as not particularly addicted to telling the truth. Here is a sample of how they were victimized by their malignant neighbors. "You know," says one writer, "when you meet a Cretan on the street and he denies that he is dead, it would be wiser not to believe a word of what he says." And this piece of good advice he follows up with a story of how two Cretans tried to outlie each other at a banquet. The first began by telling how once upon a time he was sailing on board ship from Crete to Sicily; and when they were in mid-sea, they espied a man swimming in the waves. They made for him immediately and, pulling up alongside, offered to take him on board. But the man declined their offer with the assurance: "I really don't care to come out of the water, for I have been swimming only five days, and in three days more I shall arrive at my destination. But I should appreciate a bit of oil, for I am drenched to the skin, and would enjoy a rubbing down." So they gave him some oil and sailed merrily on their way.—At this juncture, however, the other Cretan arose from the banquet table and exclaimed effusively: "How delighted I am to meet an old friend! Why, you know, I was the man to whom you gave that oil! But for one thing I never *will* forgive you: the oil you gave me wasn't a bit fragrant." However, though the stories about Cretan disregard for truth may themselves be perfectly true, this much should be said in defense of the Cretans, that truth-telling was never a national characteristic of any branch of the Hellenic race. A modern writer puts the case neatly, though perhaps somewhat unfairly, in speaking of Demosthenes: "He had so much reverence for the truth that he did not dispense it very freely to the public."

The orator Aeschines, who had himself been an actor on the stage, was fond of criticizing the violent action

and gesticulation of his great rival Demosthenes. On one occasion he hinted that it would be more becoming if orators, while speaking, kept their hand enfolded within their robe, as did Solon and the other grave and decorous public men of old. As Aeschines had been repeatedly suspected of taking bribes from foreigners, Demosthenes retorted: "You ought to keep your hand enfolded within your robe, Aeschines, not when you are speaking, but when you go on embassies."

The Greeks may seem children to us. But be careful: they were extremely clever children! *Omnia novit Graeculus esuriens.*

Florissant, Mo.

FRANCIS A. PREUSS, S. J.

Book Review

Lexicon Graecum Novi Testamenti. Auctore Francisco Zorell, S. J. Editio altera novis curis retractata. Parisiis, P. Lethielleux. 1931.

As a good lexicon is necessary for work in the New Testament, Father Zorell's second edition should be welcomed by students of New Testament Greek. Twenty years are a long span in the world of grammatical research, and many minds have been busy in that time to add to our knowledge of *Koine* Greek. Since 1911 the author has been on the lookout for fresh material, so that the statement on the title-page, *novis curis retractata*, is justified. Not only have the readings of Tischendorf and of Westcott and Hort been dealt with in the new edition, but even the variants of the *di minores*, such as Brandscheid, Hetzenauer, Von Soden, and Vogels, have found a place in it. One is pleased to see Père Joüon's *L'Evangile de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ* listed in the special bibliography. The author's method is known from the first edition, his aim being everywhere to put the student in quick possession of reliable, though condensed, information. Thus every article is a *multum in parvo*. Generally speaking, the extent of each article varies with the importance of the word discussed; but some readers will wish the author had been more generous in dealing with the numerous N. T. expressions that admit of more than one interpretation. Here, then, is a starting-point for further improvement of the Lexicon. However, one has perhaps no right to quarrel with an author for fixing his own limits, and, after all, an ideal lexicon is like the horizon: the nearer you get to it, the farther it recedes.

J. A. K.

Attention is called to an attractive 32-page S. P. C. K. pamphlet containing St. Augustine's *De Symbolo*, edited with appropriate introduction and notes, by R. W. Muncy, M. A. (The Macmillan Company; N. Y. Price \$35). The text is that of the Benedictine edition (Paris, 1679-1700). This exposition of the Creed, addressed to catechumens, should be welcome to our teachers of Latin, not only because of its intrinsic merit, but because here we have a specimen of St. Augustine's lively and colloquial way of speaking to the people, a valuable comment, moreover, by himself on his own *De Doctrina Christiana*.

Intercollegiate Latin Contest

In the annual Interecollegiate Latin Contest, held on April 8, 1931 between all the Jesuit colleges and universities of the Middle West, the following places were awarded.

1. John J. Winstel, Xavier University, Cincinnati.
2. John F. Galvin, Jr., St. Louis University.
3. Albert Muckerheide, Xavier University, Cincinnati.
4. Louis Ginochio, Xavier University, Cincinnati.
5. Louis J. Kutz, St. Louis University.
6. Edward L. Surtz, John Carroll University, Cleveland.
7. Benedict Bommarito, St. Louis University.
8. William Buehner, John Carroll University, Cleveland.
9. Alexander Harvey, St. Mary's College, St. Mary's, Kansas.
10. Lawrence W. Nolan, Rockhurst College, Kansas City, Mo.

Phaon to Sappho

(From a Fragment of Menander)

Sweet Muse, farewell: although the scented grove
Is breaking with fair blossoms of the thorn,
Though morning comes as softly as a dove,
My heart is desolate, now you are gone.
The bay may pour its fragrance on the air
And Lesbos may be garlanded with spring,
And life and song and laughter wake anew;
But ah, my heart is breaking with despair
In thinking of the blessed hours I knew,
In dreaming of the songs I heard you sing.

Sad were the melodies you sang to me—
Some loving maiden left unloved to die;
Little I realized in my ecstasy
You were the maid, the unresponsive, I.
For we together picked the meadow flower
And gathered poppies on the mountain crest,
But Love had wounded not when we were young.
Ah, Sappho, dearest, in my lonely hour
Too well I solve the riddles you have sung,
And yet too late to take you to my breast.

Weston, Mass.

GEORGE C. O'BRIEN, S. J.

I wish my reporters to know the difference between "expunge" and "expurgate," between "annihilate" and "decimate," and the easiest way to get that knowledge is by a study of Latin.—Editor of the *N. Y. Times*.

The two great primitive poems of Greece are in a sense two revelations: the *Iliad* displays the depths of human nature; the *Odyssey* discloses the immensity of the world.—Maurice Croiset.

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